INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# Learning from the experience of West European think tanks:

## a study in think tank management

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# CONTENTS

# 1. Learning from the experience of West European think tanks: key findings and conclusions

The present report has its origins in the discussions during the meeting of heads of several Central European think tanks organized by OSI Human Rights and Governance Grants Program in Budapest in March 2006. It was concluded that Central European think tanks had to face a double challenge: their countries' membership of the European Union meant the withdrawal of their traditional (often American) institutional sponsors, while continuing political instability made it difficult to rely on government funding. The question was how to maintain financial sustainability and at the same time to keep at arm's length from the national government? How to keep focused on the institution's mission, while pursuing project funding in the areas defined by the often divergent donors' interests?

The experience of London- and Brussels-based think tanks is valuable to their counterparts in countries in transition for several reasons. First, the policy research institutes from new EU Member States need to adopt their strategies for organisational efficiency to meet the demands of increasingly competitive trans-national environment – such competition has been daily bread to both the British and continental think tanks. Second, the adjustment to market conditions has brought about self-reflection on proper management of these institutions and led to the development of various 'business models'. Selected lessons could be profitably used by think tanks in our region as they face similar challenges. Finally, the CEE think tanks have at times been involved in projects funded by the same major donors which have supported their West European counterparts (the EU, large corporate and partisan foundations or international institutions). Thus, they have an opportunity to learn how to appropriately and successfully manage the relationships with these frequently much more powerful and demanding clients.

In the course of the interviews that were conducted at selected policy institutes, managers, researchers and administrative staff members have acknowledged that the challenges that were crucial to the development of Central European think tanks were of primary significance for the growth and sustainability of their own institutions. Such issues as staff turnover, managing the logistics of projects and quality of experts' work, acquisition, retention and nurturing of relationships with donors and the targeting of the consumers of the policy research for dissemination have all been recognized as fundamental to the management of think tanks at all stages of their development. In fact, most of the managers of these institutions have welcomed the opportunity to share their experience and were positively surprised at seeing the interest in the organizational aspects of their work.

Several conclusions may be made upon observation of these institutions that could be used to improve the management of think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe. **Firstly, there is no single**

**model of operating as a think tank.** The political, legal and competitive environment in which a think tank operates determines not only its professional focus, but also its choice of sources of funding, the channels of communication and formats of presentation that would work for its target audience. Thus, the British “free market” tradition **encourages a greater independence from the government or the EU institutions** and resulting quest for a diversity of sources of funds, with large private funding component. On the other hand, in the Brussels environment, where the EU institutions style themselves as technocratic agencies, very close relations with the business might jeopardize the think tanks’ impartial status and be mistaken for lobbying for corporate interests. Thus, the **adherence to the formal as well as implicit values and codes of practice** in a given environment is fundamental to the credibility of a think tank.

Secondly, all think tanks must **clearly define the ‘added value’ that they provide** to the carefully identified stakeholders. As research institutes, they are typically **expected to add analytical rigour** to an otherwise messy and politicized discussion of hot issues – thus, they have to compete for the best brains on the market and no amount of self-marketing can replace quality analytical work. If their mission is to bring together various sides of the debate to a common table, their fundamental calling will be to **ensure access to the key speakers for the different sides of the argument** while maintaining appropriate distance to any of them. The job of the top executives of the think tank is to define the mark that distinguishes it from the competition, communicate it to the outside world, instil it in the organisation’s staff and ensure that the actions observable to the public are in line with the declarations**.** Of course, many pitfalls await think tanks in all these areas, and part of the development process is ‘learning by doing’ but the **clear definition of the purpose and profile of an organisation is needed** both internally as a unifying principle and externally as a short and persuasive message to both the donors and the recipients of the think tank’s products.

Last but not least, think tanks are very distinctive types of organisations that are not easily labelled and that need to achieve many conflicting objectives. They often draw heavily on the academic methods and staff yet they **must not be run like a university department** or academic research institute, which they are not. They **need to react quickly to policy initiatives** of the governments and the EU in a nearly journalistic manner that would be understandable and attractive enough to be noticed, **but are expected to provide answers based on in-depth analysis** gained through long-term preoccupation with a wider field of study. Also think tanks must **keep close contacts with government officials** and be one step ahead of the public in knowing the upcoming policy initiatives, but must not be associated too closely with the authorities and **their voice must not be mistaken for that of the government**. These and many other dilemmas pose real challenges to the managers of think tanks who cannot lean too heavily towards either the academic, journalistic or bureaucratic manner of operation, but instead need to use the required elements and as a result come up with distinctive and customised ‘business models’ for their organisations.

What is a successful think tank then? One that maintains analytical rigour without getting slowed down as to not be able to deliver results within the short time frames determined by the donors and required by the public. One that communicates complex ideas and presents viable policy choices without ‘dumbing them down’, falling into ‘Euro-jargon’ or getting bogged down into day-to-day political conflict. One that is clear as to why it is needed on a competitive market of policy ideas and whose mission is apparent to anyone working for it, sponsoring it, reading its publications or attending its events so that it is not mistaken for its direct competitors. Its managers should be able to read the ‘signs of the times’ and proactively modify the structure, operations and external relations of the institution so as to meet the competitive pressures while remaining distinctive on the market.

After having studied the management experience of West European think tanks, the report's authors managed to identify several practices which – if employed – would help think tanks in transition countries to improve their operations and better meet the stakeholders' needs. These practices are related to three aspects of think tank management: managing the research, fundraising and dissemination.

As regards the **experts management**, the key conclusion concerns the need for think tank to **develop strong teams of in-house experts**, who would not only assure the high quality of research but also play an indispensable role in the dissemination of research results and policy recommendations. Reliance on hired or outsourced experts, though often useful and even necessary, is no substitute for a think tank's own experts. Although the size of the experts' teams has to match the financial capability of a given institution, the quality of the 'core' experts will largely determine not only the think tank's reputation but also its ability to fundraise. At the same time, even relatively small teams of experts require the **distinction of senior and junior researchers** in order to maintain necessary quality of the products while not overburdening the think tank's management with daily supervision of experts' work.

In the field of fundraising, the conception of **membership** (individual, but most often corporate) seems to have a lot to offer to Central and East European think tanks desperately seeking financial stability to substitute for departing institutional founders. The idea of membership entails **regular contributions from a number of 'members', who agree to support the think tank in the realization of its mission rather than its individual projects.** In such a way, it frees up the staff from having to seek donors for each activity and allows them to focus on research and dissemination along the lines determined by its mission and strategy of a given think tank. On the other hand, a successful implementation of corporate membership schemes is conditioned by the development of an attractive 'benefits package'. This may include privileged access to publications and events, as well as other benefits not available to public at large. It has to be said though, that a success of such schemes largely depends on the type of business culture existing in a given country and one may question whether the business community in Central Europe is mature enough to become engaged in such schemes.

As regards dissemination strategy, the key lesson is the need to **integrate research and dissemination** as well as to **diversify the instruments of dissemination** so as to meet the needs of beneficiaries and stakeholders. Thus, it is necessary for experts (at least senior researchers) to have good dissemination skills, while events and publications managers need to have a good understanding of the policy issues these experts are working on. With respect to diversification of dissemination instruments, each research project should result in a number of different 'products' – be it books, reports, policy briefs, op-eds – aimed at different sections of the readership. The rise of Internet publishing seems to serve think tanks well, allowing them for even more timely reaction to the developments in a given policy area, yet it also creates the need for new skills and instruments such as blogs, discussion forums, etc.

A striking fact is that all the interviewed representatives of think tanks were aware of the distinctive task of running an institution of the kind and thought in terms of best ways to apply general management techniques to fit the specific characteristics of think tanks. This is an important lesson since, as shown above, think tanks need to be managed differently than other organisations. The awareness of the need to reflect on the management practices of one's own think tank is the first step towards running it better.

# 2. Overview of West European think tank community

Next to North America, Western Europe is the region with the largest number of think tanks (108 and 103 respectively according to the comprehensive global NIRA directory of think tanks)[1]. Other large concentrations of think tanks are found in the developed liberal democracies of South East Asia and Pacific, such as Japan (34), Korea (12), Australia (9) or Taiwan (8). Table 1 presents the breakdown of West European think tanks by countries. The list, drawn from the NIRA directory, is not to be treated as exhaustive. However, some generalisations may be made about the distribution of think tanks on the continent. Firstly, the European countries being smaller than either the US or Japan, the numbers of think tanks in a given country are on average quite low (the mean of under 7 organisations per country). Secondly, while several organisations have a long history, it is only after the World War II that public policy advice came in demand in most West European countries.

**Table 1.** Overview of Think Tanks in Western Europe*

| Country | Estimated number of think tanks | Examples | Year first established |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 6 | Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Ladenburg | 1958 |
| Belgium | 4 | Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, European Policy Centre, Brussels | 1947 |
| Denmark | 2 | Danish Institute of International Studies, Copenhagen, Danish National Institute of Social Research, Copenhagen | 1958 |
| Finland | 4 | Research Institute of Finnish Economy, Helsinki, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki | 1946 |
| France | 9 | French Institute of International Relations, Paris, Futuribles Group, Paris, International Social Science Council, Paris | 1948 |
| Germany | 20 | German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin, Hamburg Institute of International Economics | 1908 |
| Greece | 3 | Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Athens, Institute of International Relations, Athens | 1988 |
| Ireland | 1 | Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin | 1960 |
| Italy | 5 | Centre for Social Studies and Policies, Rome, Institute of International Affairs, Rome | 1964 |

1 NIRA's World Directory of Think Tanks, http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/nwdtt/

| Country | Estimated number of think tanks | Examples | Year first established |
|---|---|---|---|
| Netherlands | 7 | Development Research Institute, Tilburg, Netherlands Atlantic Association, The Hague | 1952 |
| Norway | 3 | International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo | 1959 |
| Portugal | 1 | Portuguese Institute for International Relations and Security, Lisbon | 2001 |
| Spain | 2 | Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation, Madrid, Elcano Royal Institute | 1989 |
| Sweden | 4 | Sweden Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm | 1938 |
| Switzerland | 3 | Swiss Institute for International Economics and Applied Economic Research, St. Gallen, Europe-Third World Centre, Geneva | 1943 |
| United Kingdom | 34 | Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies, Institute Fabian Society, Chatham House, Economic Research Council, Institute of Economic Affairs, International Institute for Strategic Studies, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Overseas Development Institute, Science and Technology Policy Research | 1831 |

***According to NIRA's directory 2005 (http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/nwdtt/)**

A more detailed analysis of the history of think tanks in individual countries reveals some common origins. Five historical processes, taking place in Western Europe since 1945, have provided the foundations for the establishment of modern non-governmental policy advice institutions. First, the development of mass democratic parties (such as the Labour in Britain, still before the war, but scoring their landslide victory in 1945 or the West German SPD and CDU/CSU in the 1950s) was accompanied by the proliferation of partisan foundations (especially in Germany) or research institutes (as in Britain or the Netherlands). Second, the creation or expansion of welfare state systems that took place from late 1940s to 1960s (taking place principally in the UK, Germany, Benelux countries, Scandinavia and France) made a number of social policies subjects of public debate. Third, in a somewhat reverse movement, the failure of welfare states to respond to the economic changes of mid- and late 1970s ushered in the new frameworks for public policy analysis (new managerialism, privatisation, conservatism). Fourth, a wave of democratisation swept Southern Europe in the 1970s, bringing to an end authoritarian regimes in Greece, Portugal and Spain, which opened space for democratic party politics and openness in public debate. Finally, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the process of European integration accelerated (the Maastricht treaty leading to the Amsterdam Treaty, and the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995), making imperative the analysis of impact of EU policies on a growing number of areas of public life (including economic policy-making or foreign policy).

The above-listed factors were to a differing degree influential in the formation of budding think-tank national scenes in Central and Eastern Europe since the early 1990s, making the West European experience relevant for the think tanks of our region. The economics and politics of transition gave precedence to the conservative thought on state role in the economy and society, while weakness of home-grown political parties deferred the establishment of major partisan advice institutions. Probably the key factor for the dynamic development of think tanks in the CEE region in the late 1990s and since 2000 has been the EU accession anchor – demand for external advice increased as the national governments had limited capacity to analyse and disseminate the European issues.

# 3. Types of think tanks in Western Europe – selected cases

Common features of the West European think tanks should not blur significant distinctions among them. Among the think tanks listed in Table 1, half are found in only two West European countries, the United Kingdom and Germany. These two countries boast the longest tradition of institutions involved in policy advice. Their long historical experiences have produced distinctive dominant types of think tanks: the British 'free market' model has think tanks compete, serving the business and public sectors – most institutions there relying heavily on corporate membership; the German 'corporatist' environment tends to produce either strongly partisan foundation-based research institutions or research institutes closely tied with the academic world, specialised in economic or social policy analyses. The other areas with relatively strong think tank presence are found in central and northern parts of the continent: France (9), the Benelux countries (11), the Alpine countries (9) and Scandinavia (13). This distribution reflects, on the one hand, the longevity and continuity of democratic politics in the French- and German-speaking countries and the extensive state involvement in economic and social policy in Scandinavia. In contrast, Southern Europe has the least number of think tanks – ranging from 1 in Portugal to 5 in Italy, which may be explained by the more recent democratisation of the Iberian peninsula or Greece or the government instability in Italy.

For the purposes of this study, a sample of around ten per cent of the West European think tanks, the total of 12, has been selected. The sample is composed equally of two categories of think tanks that are deemed of particular relevance to the institutions emerging in Central and Eastern Europe. Six think tanks are located in London and are among the major British institutions – Chatham House, Demos, European Policy Forum, Centre for European Reform, Institute for Public Policy Research, International Institute for Strategic Studies – the emphasis has been on those organisations that are concerned with the EU or international issues. Six other institutes are either located in Brussels (CEPS, EPC, Friends of Europe) or are directly involved in the study of EU policy issues (EIPA in Maastricht, ISS and Notre Europe in Paris).

In addition to desk research, twelve interviews have been conducted at eight think tanks. All but one interview were done in person between 19 and 27 March 2007 – split evenly between two locations, London and Brussels. The interlocutors included managing directors, heads of administration, communications managers, human resource managers and senior researchers (see the full list in the Appendix). The sample of the institutions for interviews was selected to provide a mix of large and small organisations with different levels of experience and areas of research focus.

The think tanks that have been selected are of different age and take on various forms of legal status, as indicated in Table 2. Only two have been in existence for more than thirty years, while half were founded between 1993 and 2001, making them contemporaries of many Central and East European counterparts. A diversity of legal establishment forms is in evidence, too: ranging from registered charities and limited companies or combination of both (used in the UK) through associations, non-profit institutions to EU agencies (more typical of the continent). Actually, the legal registration is closely related to the pattern of funding – while the London-based Centre for European Reform states on its website that it does not receive any general EU or governmental grants, the Paris-based Institute for Security Studies depends nearly completely on EU or governmental funding. Most think tanks in the sample fall somewhere in between these two cases, receiving a mix of EU, public, corporate and foundation or association funds.

**Table 2.** Selected West European Think Tanks – History and Legal Status

| Name | Year Founded | Legal Status |
|---|---|---|
| Centre for European Policy Studies | 1983 | |
| Centre for European Reform | 1996 | Non-profit limited company |
| Chatham House | 1920 | Charity |
| Demos | 1993 | |
| European Institute of Public Administration | 1981 | |
| European Policy Centre | 1977 | Non-profit company |
| Foreign Policy Centre | 1998 | |
| Friends of Europe | 1999 | |
| Institute for Security Studies | 2001 | EU autonomous agency |
| Institute for Public Policy Research | 1986 | Charity |
| International Institute for Strategic Studies | 1958 | Limited company, charity |
| Notre Europe | 1996 | association |

The selected think tanks also vary in their size, both in terms of staff and revenue (Table 3). The oldest British institutions in the sample, Chatham House and International Institute for Strategic Studies, also boast the largest budgets, in the range of 6–7 million pounds (or 10 million euros). The other think tanks fall into two clear categories: small and large in terms of both human resource and financial base. Along such heavyweights as the Brussels-based CEPS, Maastricht-based EIPA or London-based IPPR, we find much smaller (and typically younger) institutions: CER and Demos in London or EPC in Brussels. However, it is worth noting that with revenues of 2–3 million euros, they are by far on stronger financial footing than any think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Table 3.** Key Data on Selected West European Think Tanks

| Name | Location | Website | Total Staff | Annual Revenues (000) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Centre for European Policy Studies | Brussels | http://www.ceps.be/ | 61 | 6,800 EUR (2006 forecast) |
| Centre for European Reform | London | http://www.cer.org.uk/ | 10 | 971 GBP (2005 income) |

| Name | Location | Website | Total Staff | Annual Revenues (000) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chatham House | London | http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/ | 80–120 | 6,247 GBP (2006) |
| Demos | London | http://www.demos.co.uk/ | 23 | 2,000 GBP (2003) |
| European Institute of Public Administration | Maastricht | http://www.eipa.nl/ | 104 | 4,090 EUR (2005) |
| European Policy Centre | Brussels | http://www.epc.eu/ | 23 | 2,700 EUR (2006) |
| Foreign Policy Centre | London | http://www.fpc.org.uk | 37 | N/A |
| Friends of Europe | Brussels | http://www.friendsofeurope.org/ | 54* | N/A |
| Institute for Security Studies | Paris | http://www.iss-eu.org/ | 24 | 3,441 EUR |
| Institute for Public Policy Research | London | http://www.ippr.org | 77 | 3,361 GBP |
| International Institute for Strategic Studies | London | http://www.iiss.org/ | 27 | 7,200 GBP |
| Notre Europe | Paris | http://www.notre-europe.eu/ | 8 | N/A |

Financial information from think tanks' web sites and annual reports (except for Demos – from NIRA directory 2005).
* 5 administrative staff plus 49 trustees (high-level politicians).

# 4. Managing the experts

## 4.1. Forms and structure of research teams

*Relations between research team and support departments.* Alongside administration, finance and publications/communications departments, research units make up the bulk of the structure of think tanks (up to 80% of the staff). It is notable that the other departments work closely with research teams at all the stages of projects. The two sides of the organisations are involved in the annual and ongoing planning of research activities; the decisions on the forms of dissemination of research and in the acquisition of new projects. An essential factor for smooth co-operation in this regard is a **certain overlap in competencies of the senior administrative and research staff:** chief finance or communications officers in think tanks need to understand the general lines of research that the institution pursues, while senior researchers are required to think in entrepreneurial fashion as they manage the budgets or communication strategies of their projects.

*Structure of research departments.* No single model of internal organisation of the research team(s) has been identified in the institutions under investigation (Table 4). Generally, the structure is adapted to cover the subject matter of research. The institutions of a more academic type (EIPA) or with comprehensive or general policy coverage tend to use divisions by issue areas: e.g. social, economic policy or health, education, etc. On the other hand, institutions preoccupied with foreign policy, diplomacy, international affairs or security find the labels based on the geographic areas more suitable. A mix of the geographic and issue-based criteria is in turn applied by the think tanks working primarily on EU issues. Their divisions often mirror the institutional makeup of various EU structures or of parts of the *acquis*—the traditional policy areas, such as employment, social affairs are complemented by territorial departments, following the divide between internal EU issues and the Community's external policies (neighbourhood, relations with third countries, transatlantic relations).

**Table 4.** Research divisions

| Name | Number of divisions | Geographic area | Issue-based | Branches |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Centre for European Policy Studies | 2 | + | + | – |
| Centre for European Reform | 17 | + | + | – |
| Chatham House | 10 | + | + | + |
| Demos | | | | |
| European Institute of Public Administration | 3 | – | + | + |
| European Policy Centre | 6 | – | + | – |
| Foreign Policy Centre | | | | |
| Friends of Europe | | | | |
| Institute for Security Studies | 0 | | | |
| Institute for Public Policy Research | 12 | + | | + |
| International Institute for Strategic Studies | 3 | + | | + |
| Notre Europe | | | | |

*Fixed vs. variable structure.* Two factors have encouraged greater flexibility of structure of research departments. Firstly, the growing importance of the EU as a policy environment as well as a donor is placing demands on the institutions to adapt their structures to serve these new needs best. In those cases, often new divisions will be created to reflect the changing priorities in European policy-making and react to the new policy debates or initiatives, such as the institutional reform (the Constitutional Treaty) or the European Neighbourhood Policy. Secondly, the institutes working in both the public policy and corporate advice sectors (as is the case with many British think tanks) need to respond to very specific orders and harness their human resources in a much more flexible manner than traditional, academically-oriented organisations. One way in which this is done is by specifying a larger number of ‘expertise areas’ (up to as many as 17 at CER) that correspond better to the topics of current debate or contemporary fields of domestic or international policy. The combination of geographic and issue-based areas serves this purpose, too, as it is supposed to be the most ergonomic way for the user (potential client) to locate the source of expertise.

*Avoiding conflicting institutional loyalties of experts.* Institutions under investigations have not viewed as an issue conflicts of interest in their experts’ institutional affiliations. Various measures have been adopted to prevent such conflicts. Primarily, it is worth noting that experts at think tanks both in London and in Brussels **tend to be closely identified with their home institutions**. **They are usually on the think tanks’ payroll**; moreover, nearly all their work is done within the institution and by policy or custom they state their affiliation with the home institution when making public presentations. Next, as noted elsewhere, think tanks tend to hire both junior and senior researchers to become full-time members of their staff, which **precludes the cases of dual careers for experts**, either in the public or private sector. Given the intensity of work at a think tank, the experts’ external commitment is usually limited to placing op-eds or giving interviews to media.

*Size and composition of research teams.* Researchers supply think tanks with analytical output, and the question of allocating them in the most optimal way is crucial for meeting the demands from the institution’s clients. Two main considerations need to be taken into account: first, the career path of internal research staff and the proper recognition of the status of various experts, and second, the issue whether and in what manner external researchers ought to be utilised.

Of course, the size of the research staff has serious implications for the organisation. There is no fixed formula for calculating the ‘right’ number of researchers as there is a trade-off between the cost and availability of expertise. On the one hand, the experts’ honoraria represent major cost items in the budgets for individual projects as well as for the institution as a whole. On the other hand, experts with proven reputation need to be identified and attracted if the institution is to win and ensure quality of major projects. Thus, **the drive towards reducing costs must be offset by the need to take on, retain and provide incentives for high-quality experts**.

Most projects require the formation of teams of **researchers at different levels of experience** who could fulfil different roles throughout the lifetime of the project. Senior experts are crucial for ensuring proper design of objectives, choice of methodology, scheduling of events, supervision of other team members, monitoring of progress and presentation of results. The visibility of the senior experts’ names is at times decisive for the success of a given project. At the same time, more junior staff, interns and even volunteers are indispensable too, as they conduct the bulk of desk or field research.

The think tanks under investigation employ between 19–49 researchers (the exceptions being the CER and ISS with fewer experts and the Chatham House with the staff size a couple of times larger than the median number) (Table 5). Those organisations that maintain permanent staff of more than 9 researchers also adopt the distinction between senior and 'ordinary' researchers. However, the share of senior members in the overall research staff varies among the organisations. The ratio of senior to rank-and-file permanent staff members usually stands at around 1 to 2 or 1 to 3.

**Table 5.** Size and composition of research team

| Name | Total number of researchers | Senior researchers | Permanent research staff | External/visiting researchers | Interns* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Centre for European Policy Studies | 44 | 13 | 38 | 6 | 4 |
| Centre for European Reform | 5 | 3 | 5 | 0 | – |
| Chatham House | 119 | | 119 | 0 | – |
| Demos | | | | | |
| European Institute of Public Administration | 39 | 19 | 34 | 5 | – |
| European Policy Centre | 19 | 1 | 9 | 10 | – |
| Foreign Policy Centre | 31 | 11 | 31 | 0 | 1 |
| Friends of Europe | 49 | 0 | 0 | 49 | – |
| Institute for Security Studies | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 | – |
| Institute for Public Policy Research | 34 | 10 | 34 | 0 | – |
| International Institute for Strategic Studies | 28 | 12 | 28 | 0 | – |
| Notre Europe | | | | | |

* A number of institutions do not list interns on their websites, though they offer internship opportunities on an ongoing basis.

## 4.2. Types of contractual relationships and terms of reference

*Preference for full time employment.* **Salaried, full-time employment is a standard form of relationship with research experts**. This may take on the form of limiting the staff to the payroll as in some research-centred institutions or may distinguish the permanent members of research team and the temporary consultants hired for specific projects. The main reasons of this form of employment are: (1) compliance with the labour regulations, which, as in Britain, state that comparable terms of reference ought to be covered by standard work contracts with all social security and Labour-Code benefits, (2) exclusive affiliation with the think tank, (3) contract-stipulated time availability of the expert, which allows flexible planning of staffing on new projects, and (4) savings due to the reduction in payment of hourly or daily consultants' fees.

Most think tanks have internship programmes. Although internships may be treated instrumentally by both the applicants (as a CV entry) and the think tanks (as the source of inexpensive or even free workforce), they can be very effective ways to screen potential team members. These opportunities are appreciated both by the interns and think tanks, providing mutual benefits. On the one hand, they allow to get a thorough view of a potential associate's set of skills and make it possible to assess whether the entrant is a 'match' for the think tank's unique work environment. On the other hand, the internship is a trial period for the applicant who may be confirmed in his or her determination to stay on board.

In contrast, only few think tanks make use of external/visiting researchers at the senior level. Among those that do, the *Friends of Europe* is remarkable for doing all policy work with external researchers only. In fact, this is in line with the organisation's model of work in which the projects are chosen and implemented with full participation of the representatives of the members. The priority issues are identified and publications drawn up at informal sandwich lunch meetings, involving variable-shape Focus Groups, which are attended by no more than 12-15 experts drawn from among the regular members (including governments, corporations, EU institutions and NGOs).

*Need for flexibility.* However, the fast pace at which projects are commissioned and implemented, the increasing demand for technical expertise and the advantage of 'bringing in the fresh blood' all speak for the **occasional reliance on additional, non-permanent staff**. This includes both consultants who serve as subcontractors for the more technical tasks (building and maintaining a project website), commissioned experts (e.g. legal analysts) and even senior project supervisors who hold high positions in the government or possess strong academic credentials. In all cases, they cannot be employed permanently for the reasons of finance (being too expensive overall), institutional affiliation (holding office or full-time academic career) and the duration of the project (their expertise being needed only for a single project).

*Drafting terms of reference for research experts.* Generally the preference for full-time employment of researchers requires that the terms of reference are laid down in labour contracts signed upon entry. The minimum information entered in the contract is stipulated by national law, usually covering the length of the working week, the value and structure of the financial package, listing the benefits and mutual obligations of the employer and the employee. The question as to how detailed the description of the responsibilities should be in the contract may be approached from two perspectives. Many think tanks choose to rely on the common understanding of the terms 'analyst' or 'researcher' that prevails on the local market. **Some organisations prefer to codify their expectations in internal documents, such as the staff regulations, instructions or work guidelines**: this is usually necessary in larger think tanks, applying a more elaborate career ladder with distinctions between 'junior' and 'senior' staff and formal review and advancement procedures. Other organisations develop their own culture, in which the scope of responsibilities, the channels of communications and the chain of command are all **part of unwritten agreement, executed through daily practice.** Leaving the scope of responsibilities out of the contract is particularly advisable for the organisations that have flat structure and staff their researchers more flexibly (adopting the principle of 'learning by doing' or 'giving the newcomers as much responsibility as they can take').

Shorter, less definite terms of reference are appropriate for acquiring entry-level research staff who are not certain about their vocation, lack expertise and whose specific skill sets cannot be assessed until they have worked on various projects. However, once the organisations grow and develop fixed structures, the departments **will be in search of mid-career professionals**, and both parties will be better off if the terms of contract are worded very carefully. This applies in particular to temporary consultants brought in for specific tasks – it is necessary to specify their position within the structure so that it is clear who they report to and what are the limits of their availability. Specific descriptions are also indispensable for unique positions, especially those involving a mix of management and research. Such managerial contracts are custom-made as a result of negotiations with high-level professionals who join the think tank to head a project or a team or who co-ordinate several initiatives.

# 4.3. Retention and incentives for experts

*General principles of remuneration policy.* It appears that the examined institutions increasingly view the salary levels as an important, though not the only, incentive for retaining the research staff. One key lesson is **that salaries should be attractive enough to enable the researchers to focus on their work as specified in the terms of reference** (reducing the incentives for engaging in other, non-core activities) and that the packages should conform to the standard established both within an institution and across different think tanks, so that comparable positions are rewarded at roughly the same level. These two principles help reduce the negative phenomena that still plague the Central and East European think tank community: low salaries or even lack of permanent employment for researchers who are forced to seek multiple smaller contracts, resulting in the dissipation of efforts, poorer quality and at times conflicts of interest, and the generally higher turnover due to instability of contracts (often negotiated ad hoc) and search for better conditions.

Remuneration packages need to be competitive, that is comparable to other reference positions that are chosen by the typical candidates for joining think tanks. Several executives or human resource persons noted that inter-sectoral comparisons are made for the purpose of designing salary offers for researchers. In London, **universities and government service were typically named as such references**, especially in larger, academic-oriented institutions with a more formal hierarchical structure (such as the IISS or ICPR). It is worth noting that unlike in the CEE region, the West European think tanks rely on full-time professional researchers, who **opt for the policy analysis sector to the temporary or permanent exclusion of academia**. This means that the contracts offered to researchers are comprehensive and for all practical purposes serve to focus the permanent staff's efforts on the work deployed at a think tank. The larger institutions emulate universities by differentiating the salary levels between junior and senior staff and by offering formal performance review procedures, which are used to advance the researchers after the probationary period is over to the membership in a community of peers. The contracts reflect the secure status of researchers, including not only the precise definition of the value of the financial package but also a set of other items, which highlight the stability of employment (such as an offer of permanent employment, formal inclusion into the research team with clearly-defined terms of reference and the prospects of advancement within a hierarchy).

Smaller think tanks also adopt standard contract forms along the lines common in the institutions that are used as reference points. This is done to attract both the target group of job applicants who are naturally drawn to some positions (e.g. the European Commission in Brussels) and mid-career professionals with experience in a certain sector (former editors and journalists of political press). As noted above, the less academically-oriented think-tanks position themselves vis-à-vis the political class and the interest groups as the entry points to the policy-making community or as platforms for communication between the public and the decision-makers. Thus, unlike the academia, but rather similar to the media, public relations or consulting firms, these think tanks will attract the professionals who are more comfortable with a broader, more informal and dynamic career paths. As there is less need for security, stability and formal prestige for ensuring their commitment, the contracts are likely to be drafted in a more flexible manner: stressing the co-ordination aspect and management responsibilities, the continual review process, fluid assignment and advancement procedures and the multiple roles in the workplace.

It becomes clear that the **further away an institution moves from the academic to 'consultancy' model, the more important the direct financial incentives become**. As smaller think tanks lack the prestige associated with the long-standing traditions of research and publication, they need to base their remuneration strategies on the current benefits to the staff that are directly related to the products, be they consulting or media work. Although the restrictions imposed by the donors usually preclude direct profit-sharing, general annual or occasional performance bonuses are often used. However, in the final account, the best practices of the media or consulting sectors indicate that solid starting salaries with periodic performance reviews allowing for predictable wage raises are key to motivating professionals. At the same time, it is fundamental that the reviews are based on verifiable and objective indicators and that the salary progression system is transparent, avoiding any charges of arbitrariness or partiality. These precautions are particularly important in small, close-knit teams, where trust is essential for ensuring smooth co-operation.

## 4.4. Recruitment and human resource management

*Expert acquisition.* Think tanks in Western Europe draw on a broad pool of applicants for entry-level research positions. The long tradition of professional politics and diverse political debate in Britain has long attracted the 'best and brightest' graduates of top schools (such as Oxford, Cambridge or the London School of Economics and Political Science) to such sectors as the media, social science research, civil service or party politics. The London-based think tanks target this market as well, searching not only for academic credentials but also for the record of public or professional activity. While specific requirements differ among the think tanks, emphasis being placed on one or another aspect, **generally the hunt is for insightful and rigorous analysts who can communicate the findings in a concise and understandable manner to the media and the general public**. The supply of applicants is constant, considering the attractions of the London location, association of think tanks with impact and the promise of interesting and stimulating job.

The Brussels scene attracts in turn the graduates of both the UK and Continental schools, and the primary 'catch' is the opportunity to gain insight into the inner workings of the EU bureaucracy and increasing the chances for joining the ranks of Commission or Council bureaucrats. Qualities that are appreciated are similar here, but of course foreign language abilities and knowledge of the EU's operations are additional requirements.

Methods of recruitment. At this market where the supply of applicants considerably outstrips the demand (the respondent at a major British think tank recalled the fact that as many as over 400 applicants responded to a single ad for a researcher's position), no efforts must be spared to match the applicant to the position. **Regular entry-level positions are not advertised in the press.** The factors are the cost and ineffectiveness – the interviewees complained that brief press ads could not communicate in sufficient depth the type of candidates who were preferred – one of the reasons is the fact that a certain mix of 'soft skills' rather than merely 'hard qualifications' is sought, which is difficult to communicate in a brief form. For that reason, many organisations prefer to place information about vacancies on their web sites, where the space is less limited.

Moreover, several institutions have chosen not to advertise regular researcher positions but rather use more informal techniques. For instance, the executives, human resource and communications managers as well as senior researchers are on the lookout for suitable additions to the research team. Those could be located via their output (articles, contributions or presentations) or through the 'word-of-mouth' communication.

There is agreement among the respondents **that it is preferable to hire candidates with little or no experience of working at another think tank.** This could be explained by a small number of think tanks, each of which develops its own culture or 'way of doing things' and occupies a slightly different niche of the market. To maintain their distinctive organisational characteristics, think tanks therefore prefer to take on ‘fresh’ staff, untainted by the habits or preferences of the competition and socialise the newcomers in the internal ways of the organisation. Moreover, it is rather uncommon to observe mobility of staff among think tanks since **they are often regarded as stepping-stones for the career and not as destinations**. In contrast, think tanks welcome the professionals from the media or civil service as they contribute writing skills or legal expertise. The process of acquisition is informal, and usually the executives are involved in making first contacts since the search for qualified staff is ongoing and is not conducted to fill specific positions but rather to diversify the skill and expertise set of the institution.

*Supervision of experts' work.* As noted above, the research teams are usually composed of full-time experts whose commitment is legally ensured through a labour contract. As the contracts are concluded between the employee and the think tank as a legal entity, the organisation is entitled to a general, centralised performance review which is the formal basis for advancement or in case of serious breach of duty for disciplinary action. **The general contracts may also stipulate the additional requirements** (such as the availability for travel or representation of the think tank at public events) – it is advisable that the general scope of work is jointly agreed upon. For instance, it is important to ensure that upon entry a researcher is aware of the possibility to be reassigned to different project or to be a member of various teams as a need may arise. Also, a clear chain of command and routes for redress of grievances within teams must be established centrally so that irreconcilable differences between team members are resolved early by the central management.

However, the growing specialisation and the division of labour among project teams requires **delegation of daily supervision of work of junior researchers to middle management, usually senior researchers or project leaders.** Here two aspects of performance review need to be noted: firstly, the assessment of the overall personal progress of an expert, and secondly, the verification of the quality and control of the output produced under the institution's name by the expert. The latter issue is treated in the section on dissemination, concerning so-called peer review and editorial process. The general assessment in turn consists of a number of complementary actions that aim at the professional and personal support of a team member and the measures that are taken in case of problems.

The primary challenge for any researcher at a think tank is the steep learning curve that continues throughout one's career and resulting ‘stretch’ and stress. To help the beginning researchers cope with the information overload and conflicting commitments, **trainings are needed on various analytical methods** (e.g. ICPR commissions external trainings on e.g. systems analysis) or time management. Another important aspect is **coaching by more experienced researchers** – while professional issues are typically taken care of by the team leader or direct superior, personal problems (such as conflicts within the team) are better addressed by a ‘mentor’ or a senior researcher who is not currently overseeing the work of this team. In cases of strong intra-team conflicts, disputes may be formally settled at the level of the Director of Research who may arrange for the reassignment of the conflicted parties. It must be remembered, however, that conflicts may result from the unclear allocation of authority or responsibilities and strategic changes at the level of a think tank may be needed.

Another problem is the flaws in planning projects and department timelines or budgets and resulting lags or deficits. These may stem from wrong staffing decisions, where too junior staff members have been allocated too great responsibilities. Supervision is needed there as a diagnostic tool, helping spot and eliminate any looming dangers at an early enough stage, requiring either greater field commitment of senior staff or even re-staffing. However, such mismatches are unavoidable and actually some smaller organisations which cannot afford formal trainings (such as Demos) **opt for the ‘learning by doing’ model**.

# 5. Fundraising strategies

## 5.1. Sources of funds

West European think tanks rely on a variety of sources of funds. As opposed to their Central and East European counterparts, **research projects are not the dominant line of budgetary revenues** (Table 6). Project-related inflows make up around half of the budget of CEPS or Chatham House, but are far less significant at other institutes. Neither the relative newcomer, CER, nor the well-established IPPR rely for more than 20 percent of their revenue on project work. Six other categories of revenue may be identified that provide a mix of regular inflows. These can be divided into two categories: external and internal. External sources of funds are dependent on the donations from corporate and individual members or from institutional partners and grants from governments or the EU. Internal sources are drawn from either the organisation of events, sale of publications or return on investment (for instance through rental of office space or conference venue).

**Table 6.** Breakdown of Sources of Funding

| Think tank | Projects | Membership donations | Institutional partners | Organising events | Publication sales | Grants | Investment | Other sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CEPS | 50 | 39 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 3^ | 0 | 0 |
| Chatham | 51 | 27 | 4 | 5 | 9* | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| CER | 20 | 75 | 0 | ** | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| EPC | 31 | 31 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 4^ | 0 | 2 |
| IISS | 0 | 26 | 0 | 41 | 7 | 19 | 7 | 0 |
| IPPR | 12 | 67 | 0 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

* With other items.
** Included into projects.

The mix between the two categories varies**. Membership donations are the single item that all the institutions analysed in the table report as significant**, ranging from over one-quarter (Chatham House, IISS) to two-thirds (IIPR) and three-quarters (CER) of the total revenue. Together with other external sources (transfers from institutional partners and grants) they account for the definite majority of revenue for all but one institution. With the exception of IISS, internal sources (events, publications, investment) do not exceed 20 per cent and for a number of institutions these account for less than 10 per cent. Only the largest think tanks draw significant share of their budgets from return on investment – the Chatham House enjoys considerable income in absolute terms from renting its premises. However, this option is closed to many institutions either as they are not owners, but mere tenants, of real estate, or because their legal status is strictly not-for-profit.

## 5.2. Strategies for sustainability

*Institutional donors.* Brussels-based think tanks, working on European issues, are recipients of EU annual grants – these are however, relatively small (accounting for less than 5 per cent of their budgets). Their financial stability is to a much larger extent tied up with their ability to secure stable relations with institutional donors either in the form of project commissions or strategic sponsorship. CEPS has concentrated on projects with the EU and intergovernmental organisations (44 per cent of the total project revenue), while maintaining a wide portfolio of other funders (mainly private sector but also national governments and foundations). On the other hand, EPC's core funding comes from two philanthropic foundations which are its official strategic partners, accounting for 32 per cent of its budget.

A clear distinction may be made between the funding strategies of think tanks by their location (London or Brussels) and mission (research or debate promotion). EU funding is actively sought after both in the form of an institutional grant and in projects among the Brussels-based institutions. At the other side of the spectrum is the London-based Centre for European Reform, which in principle does not accept any funds from public institutions as it believes that **a think tank's financial independence from the government or international institutions is indispensable to preserving intellectual freedom**. These two approaches seem to reflect the differences in policy environment: while in Britain, think tanks are considered to maintain a distance from the authorities, let alone from supranational institutions such as the European Commission, all the think tanks under study in Brussels have been formed to stimulate and inform the debate involving the EC.

Another crucial divide separates think tanks by their mission or self-positioning on the policy advice market. Generally, institutions that define research as their *raison d'etre* stress the importance of independence to present their own distinctive viewpoints on issues to the extent that clauses ensuring that the disbursement of funding would not be made conditional upon a given conclusion are inserted into all project contracts. **Research institutions tend to limit their membership offers to briefing on the research results, free publications or guaranteed seats at their public events.** One of the London-based research think-tanks, Demos, has actually decided against developing any membership contracts at all and chosen to rely on projects won in competitive bids only. The rationale for this strategy has been its reluctance to have any strings attached to the projects.

*Corporate membership.* **Donations from corporate and individual members represent a significant part of the total revenue of the investigated think tanks**. Corporate membership accounts for 31 per cent of the budget of EPC and 39 per cent of the CEPS' revenues. Corporate donations are of particular importance to the smaller organisations that are more vulnerable financially. For the newly-established organisations assuring steady flow of donations from even a smaller number of funders is crucial to survival in case of low numbers of projects. This is especially vital for covering the start-up costs of renting space, advance payments or marketing and establishing a website. For instance, three quarters of the CER's budget is made up of corporate donations, drawn from only 38 members (37 corporations and one foundation).

The concept of membership is much broader in cases of some of the later-established organisations that grew out of consulting business (such as the Friends of Europe) or define themselves less as research institutes and more as forums for the articulation of various interests and positions in the debate (see the Centre in Brussels). The Friends of Europe makes use of the synergies between its for-profit consulting sister organisation and own debate and publication series. While the two branches are clearly separated and the public organisation does not favour the consulting clients or lobby on their behalf, its membership concept stresses the individualised benefits to corporate donors – such as small-circle dinners with top EU officials. The organisation clearly differentiates its financial packages for corporate membership, which ranges from the regular offer for 1350 euros a year to the VIP package for 5500 euros annually. Notably, while the regular membership promises a ‘reserved seat’ at a table at evening debate series and a ‘possibility to directly communicate with key heavy-hitters’, the VIP package guarantees display of company logo, corporate information materials and mention of support in all agendas of the general events as well the promise of ‘direct’ communication with key heavy-hitters and input into the themes to be discussed at the annual event. The Centre, which defines itself as ‘think and do tank’ shies away from arranging closed events or promising direct contact with EU policy-makers, but its membership concept highlights participation in Brussels events and briefing about EU affairs as well.

*Diversification of donors.* Interviews with think tanks confirm that institutional core funding is relatively small or even does not feature in the budgets of many institutions that were identified. Membership donations are not guaranteed either: contracts are renewable (typically annually) and especially in the cases of research institutions amount to fees for subscription of publications. The high number of donors or members indicates that none of them provides substantial part of the think tank’s revenue. The diversification of both donors and members is dictated by two rationales: first, in cases of corporate members, a balance of various sectors and representation of major players confirms the high status of a think tank and is a sign of its impartiality; second, since affiliation with just a few companies may advise against involving in projects directly related to the sector of the member’s activity, a representation of two sides in an issue (environmentalists and energy companies, for instance) among the members can help clear the think tank from such allegations.

With growth comes the drive towards diversification of sources of donations. At the extreme, the IISS boasts 450 corporate and institutional members, located in more than 100 countries, in addition to 2,500 individual members. For this think tank with branches on several continents, the widening of the pool of members is not only a strategy of financing but of extending its reach and disseminating results. The numerical growth also usually requires careful identification of categories of donors. For instance, EPC’s 401 institutional members represent nine groups (102 diplomatic representations, 88 corporate members, 84 professional associations, 41 regional authorities and bodies, 40 NGOs, 15 intergovernmental organisations as well as 3 religious bodies and 2 governmental agencies).

## 5.3. Relations with members and donors

*Concept of membership.* While the term ‘membership’ recurs often in the annual reports and statements of most think tanks on both sides of the Channel, **there has not been an agreement as to a single rationale for maintaining such relationships** (and one of the think tanks, Demos, has actually given up on this source of funding as a matter of principle). This involves the scope and conditions of the contract or the degree to which the contract needs to be standardised or formalised. This variety reflects the different legal and accounting regimes binding these relationships as well as the multiple models of relationship that think tanks themselves have employed. There is agreement as to two principles guiding these relationships. The first rule is when donations are accepted for doing policy work, **no funding can be revoked or discontinued due to the donor’s disapproval of conclusions that the think tank makes.** In other words, these conclusions are explicitly those of the think tank and not of the donor, and even a hint of influence from the donor or member on the research organisation would compromise the latter in the eyes of the competition and the public.

*Managing membership.* As the body of members grows, proper management is required to ensure the renewal of yearly commitment and maintenance of the level of support. West European think tanks have adopted some strategies used by corporations to nurture relationships with key clients. These are (1) proper segmentation, (2) customising the package of benefits and (3) allocation of dedicated staff to maintain the ties. Virtually all the organisations distinguish between corporate and individual members, differentiating the price for publications and range of benefits. However, further distinctions within the pool of corporate donors are made to highlight the top donors, drawn among the corporate heavyweights or the initial or most loyal donors.

For instance, the EPC's corporate membership comes in four packages: the top layer of donors is named 'Platinum' and includes two founder corporations and seven other multinationals. The 'Gold' segment is the broadest, accounting for 54 of 88 corporate donors, including major manufacturers, banks, consulting companies as well as the London Stock Exchange. The mid-range 'Silver' and entry-level 'Bronze' categories have been taken by several smaller companies, law and consulting firms.

A range of benefits is offered by the think tanks. Discounts on publications and regular newsletters are standard. However, **the institutions that excel at managing relations with neighbours provide far more diverse forms of benefits**. For instance, the Chatham House issues invitations and keeps members updated about its host of research events and provides online access to a library of 150,000 books and over 300 periodicals. Discounts on publications and regular newsletters are standard. However, **the institutions that excel at managing relations with neighbours provide far more diverse forms of benefits**.

The interaction is made easier through wide use of online communication – the members (corporate or individual) may renew their subscriptions via the web page, order books using downloadable forms, and gain access to audio, video recordings of the think tank's events. In addition, the Chatham House has set up special forums for the member in general and discussion groups for the under-35-year-olds. These forms of active involvement target the think tank's members who typically are interested in international affairs – the individual members include academics or researchers, while corporate ones give access to, business people, diplomats, the media or politicians. Even greater form of participation is offered to the regular members of the Friends of Europe, whose status enables them to join focus groups that actually get to work on policy issues and prepare the institute's publications.

*Fundraising.* Relationships with donors are priority items for the management staff of all think tanks in question. From the inception of a think tank, its founders need to send clear messages as to what the donors may expect from the institution and what form of relationship could be established. As think tanks are relatively small organisations in business terms, **top executives remain their primary representatives to donors**, and notwithstanding the formal process of bidding for projects or reporting the performance, they need to communicate to donors the organisation's strategy, mid-term objectives and positioning vis-ŕ-vis other players on the local market of ideas. This is particularly true with regard to corporate members whose funding decisions are less influenced by their own interest in particular policy areas, but rather by **their acceptance of the general profile of the institution and recognition of its continued excellence.** In other words, their support depends on the appreciation of general 'clout' or expectation that the think tank's activities do make an impact in the policy arena.

# 6. Dissemination

One feature that seems to distinguish between a think tank and an academic research institution is the fact that the former tend to make dissemination an essential part of their mission. For that purpose, Western European think tanks, like their American counterparts, have developed a variety of tools and means of dissemination of the research results in order to reach their targeted audiences: policy makers, other policy researchers, academics, journalists, civil society leaders as well as the public at large. While publications remain a key element of dissemination, other channels such as public events (seminars, conferences, round-tables), presence in electronic and printed media as well as internet tools (e.g. blogs) remain essential for successful dissemination strategy. However, in view of the limited scope of the present study, we focused mainly on the publication strategies and management.

## 6.1. Dissemination strategies

*Diversification of types of publications.* In order to better adjust to the needs of their beneficiaries, think tanks diversify the range of their publications. The smaller ones focus on regular coverage of issues through an array of formats of analytical papers. For instance, the EPC produces six regular series of publications: (1) working papers providing background to key issues facing the EU that are the product of programme work, (2) shorter issue papers, not necessarily related to the current analytical work, (3) ‘up-to-the-minute’ policy briefs providing diagnosis and forecast on current developments, (4) regular newsletters summarising the activities of the EPC’s programmes and providing news to the think tank’s members, (5) post-summit analyses, written by senior experts in the wake of every European summit, and (6) *Challenge Europe*, a public policy journal. The larger think tanks publish books, too. EIPA’s publication offer includes books in addition to working papers, conference proceedings and *the Current European Issues* series.

*On-line publishing.* There has been a general shift from hard-copy to electronic-form publications. For example, as early as in 2003, 72 per cent of CER publication sales came from the downloads of PDF publications, and the share rose to 77 per cent in 2006. The think tank relies heavily on subscription and has developed a pricing system encouraging the switch from hard-copy to PDF, which obviously reduces production and distribution costs. Full switch to electronic publications would help to reduce the length of the publication process and staff time.

However, the rise of Internet technologies does not only allow to place the ready-for-printing publications online, but also results in developing new interactive instruments of dissemination. For example, the CER relies on a blog, in which its experts comment on current EU-related policy issues and allow for comments to be published so as to involve the visitors of their websites in meaningful policy dialogue.

*Tracking the reach and impact*. The growing significance of the online interface is also visible in the use of monitoring of website usage for reporting think tanks’ performance. For instance, the CEPS presents in its annual report the statistics of 'hits' and downloads. This is in addition to the more traditional measurements used, for instance, by the Chatham House that boasts a record number of mentions in the national and international press.

*Pricing and subscription strategies.* As shown in Table 6, publications account for significant parts of the revenue portfolio only at largest think tanks (Chatham and IISS). However, they are closely linked with other budget categories: project work and membership revenue—since they may be used both to disseminate specific project findings and to build loyalty among the members through subscription. Unlike regular publishers, think tanks typically do not aim at mass retail market, and instead focus on in-house distribution, which allows them to target specialised audience or reach relevant policy-makers.

**Distribution is closely tied to the membership policy**. The Chatham House offers its regular members free copies of its periodical publications – monthly magazine *The World Today* and *International Affairs* journal. In addition, its reports on recent events are e-mailed directly to the members. The Chatham House also co-publishes scholarly books. **The think tank's m**embers may receive a 30% discount from the Blackwell Publishing on a choice of titles or they may order the books directly from the Chatham House's site.

At CER, the publications are available through annual subscription, which is contracted online by submitting a form directly on the website or through regular mail (with cheque attached). The subscription fees are adjusted to reflect the differences between the various categories of customers – ranging from individuals through universities and libraries to embassies and corporations. For instance, in Europe the subscription for a hard copy publication might cost from 70 GBP for individuals through 150 GBP for libraries or universities to reach 200 GBP for embassies and 300 GBP for corporations. PDF copies are priced competitively at 50-100 GBP, which represents a discount of nearly 70 per cent compared to hard copies for non-European corporate clients.

*Relations with the media.* Mass media (both print and electronic) are primarily the channel for dissemination of the results of research, and the bulk of the contributions are made by researchers as part of their project-related activities. This diffuse form of contacts characterises especially those organisations that attribute their results to specific authors. In contrast, **some organisations approach the media proactively to communicate their generic positions on issues**. All the public events, especially those featuring high-rank keynote speakers, give the opportunity for think tanks to build their reputation by being associated with specific topics on the public agenda as their 'fields of expertise'. Since the experts rarely contribute to the media op-eds or letters independently of their research carried out within the think tank, **they are obliged (either formally or by tacit agreement) to provide their affiliations in the by-lines and ensure proper referencing**.

## 6.2. Management of the publication process

There is no uniform practice on the organisation of publications and dissemination. Thus, the EIPA keeps its publication in-house, and there is possibility for placing orders on the institute's website. Other institutions combine their own distribution with agreements with publishers. The IISS, a large think tank, offers all its publications via a third-party, the publishing house Taylor and Francis. This may be dictated by the fact that the Institute is responsible for an authoritative annual report on armed forces that is of interest to a large number of customers globally – the publisher's extensive distribution network helps the institute reduce dissemination costs while assuring fast delivery to clients. The global reach of the Institute's publications presents additional logistical challenges as the think tank produces as many as five types of regular hard-copy publications, including a quarterly journal and two annual reports. At the same time, the IISS allows its members to place orders on its own website and it places online briefs on 'breaking issues'.

Keeping the Publications Department in-house has other advantages for think tanks. First of all, since the publications are typically results of own research and the staff researchers are the authors, it makes sense to manage the pre-publication process as part of the general research project management. Another consideration is the fast reaction that is required of think tanks, especially in smaller-format policy briefs or online publications, which makes the publication process much closer to that of the press, requiring a lot of interaction and co-ordination between the research and publication departments. Then come the questions of oversight and control over the publication process and quality, which may be exercised more easily, making room for required changes at will. Finally, since most think tanks produce relatively short runs of a broad range of titles, these do not make for economies of scale and costs are more easily controlled in-house.

However, it must be remembered in all cases that **form follows function**. Organisational arrangements for disseminating the publications need to match the objectives of a given think tank, fit into its model of relations with donors and subscribers and smoothly integrate into the model of research production and delivery. In short, publishing must be viewed as an integral part of the internal work process of the research teams. A number of interviewees stressed that such integration could only be possible if the support staff (editors, publications and communications managers) were notified and even consulted at early stages of projects, starting with the design phase. Moreover, it is important that **the publications department's activity is co-ordinated by the think tank's management,** which should ensure that publications are designed, launched or marketed with the participation of the research team leaders. Leaving the publication and dissemination process in the hands of the editing, typesetting and layout professionals alone runs the risk of incorrect targeting of a publication, and takes away from the research team a major performance incentive: control over the product of their work.

*Structure of the publication units.* The number and organisation of the staff responsible for publications varies with the size of a think tank and its policy on membership. Organisations that are smaller or less focused on development of membership or organisation of events limit the management to a single coordinator. FPC and Friends of Europe employ one Communications Officer each. At Friends of Europe, the Officer is "responsible for media relations, press releases, newsletters and production of publications" while organising European policy summits. EIPA also concentrates responsibilities in the hands of one person, however the scope is different – as the title states – Head of Information, Documentation, Publications and Marketing Services.

The tendency to combine management of publications, membership and events can be seen in larger think tanks, while it is often separated in the smaller ones. The relatively slim institutions such as EPC or CER divide these functions, employing one Membership and Publications Executive (EPC) or Publications Manager and Web Editor (CER) and two persons responsible for events (Administrator and Assistant). The Chatham House on the contrary mixes the various functions across its two departments for External Communications and Membership Development, the former housing Membership Events and Marketing Administrator, while the latter including the Membership Relations Manager and the Corporate Relations Manager. The importance of the two areas is reflected in the size of the two departments: the total of nine persons are employed there. Yet another structure is used by the IISS – its Publications Department clearly focuses on the editorial process, featuring Manager of Editorial Services and two assistant editors, responsible for individual publication series.

*Quality and output control:* The extent to which the Publications Department is independent and has the final say on the format and targeting of the think tank's output determines the model for controlling the quality of the final products. If the Publications Department serves as a mere recipient of ready-made material, produced in the research departments, the control function is concentrated in research teams as well. **For instance, the CER practices extensive peer review of all its materials on a simple principle, 'everyone comments on everyone else's work'.** The CER's Publications Manager is more of a facilitator and participant in this process. Such a model is suitable for smaller think tanks, which either cannot afford a dedicated editorial team or whose researchers have great writing and style skills. The model with extensive peer review is also natural for the think tanks that choose to work out joint statements on behalf of the institution.

In contrast, some larger, more academically-oriented think tanks prefer to formalise the editorial process. The ICPR has established both project-level supervision groups and external senior researcher review bodies that form the second hurdle for the material to clear. External academic reviewers are brought in at some think tanks as well. The introduction of a second-level review board is important for maintaining fidelity to the values and general coherence of policy positions and advice. Once the material is revised according to the formal feedback offered by the review board and approved in the subsequent reading, a decision is made at the central, executive level as to whether, in what format and when the publication should be released. Larger organisations tend to manage the process through the formal acceptance of a general publications plan, listing the releases to be made in the year to come. The Publications Department is involved in the planning process, however the policy decisions are made by the Board in view of such strategic considerations as the general 'line' of the institution, impact on its visibility and timing coinciding with the state of the debate.

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